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AUTHOR Wood, Fred H.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this national survey was to determine how many general curriculum vacancies will be open in universities in 1978 through 1981 and the nature of the search process for these positions. Five specific questions were considered: (1) How many general curriculum vacancies will be open between the spring of 1978 and fall of 1981 and where will those vacancies be located? (2) At what rank and salary will these general curriculum vacancies be filled? (3) Has there been an increase or decrease in the number of general curriculum positions in institutions of higher education? (4) What areas of curriculum study, experiences, and other factors are considered most important when reviewing candidates for assistant professor position, and are there different criteria when positions are to be filled at a higher rank? (5) What are the procedures used when initiating and completing a search for a general number of vacancies? The responses of university deans to these questions are reported. Findings indicate that there will continue to be general curriculum positions available. A list of responding deans is appended, as well as a table of generally preferred scholastic and experiential background, and salary potential in geographic areas. (JD)

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219

THE JOB MARKET FOR CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By: Dr. Fred H. Wood, Professor of Education

Dr. Edmund C. Short, Associate Professor of Education

Steven R. Thompson, Program Development Specialist
PSU/KCSD Teacher Corps

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

March 1, 1978

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The Job Market for Curriculum Specialists in Higher Education

In this time of declining enrollments and shrinking budgets, what is the nature of the job market for general curriculum specialists in colleges and universities? During the 1977 meeting of Professors of Curriculum just prior to the ASCD Convention in Houston, this question was raised and much to the surprise of those present, no one really knew. Of course, the conventional wisdom of the group suggested that the recent retrenchment in higher education had resulted in a reduction in the number of college positions for curriculum generalists. But the fact was, the data which could provide a clear picture of the general curriculum job market were not available.

Yet, there is a continuing need for this kind of information. Curriculum professors, graduate students, many curriculum practitioners and, of course, college administrators have an interest in current and future college vacancies for curriculum generalists. In response to this need, a nationwide survey was conducted in the Fall of 1977 to assess the potential vacancies for general curriculum professors in institutions offering doctorates in curriculum.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine (1) the number and nature of university vacancies for general curriculum specialists over the next three years; and (2) the nature of the search process for these positions. More specifically, the study was designed to answer these questions:

* How many general curriculum vacancies will be open between the Spring 1978 and Fall of 1981 and where will those vacancies be located?

* At what rank and salary will these general curriculum vacancies be filled?

* Has there been an increase or decrease in the number of general curriculum positions in institutions of higher education over the past three years (1974-75 through 1976-77)?

* What areas of curriculum study, experiences and other factors are considered most important when reviewing candidates for assistant professor positions? Are there different criteria when the positions are to be filled at a higher rank?

* What are the procedures used when initiating and completing a search for a general curriculum vacancy?

Procedures

To obtain answers to these questions, the Deans of Education in the ninety-two universities and three colleges that offered doctorates in curriculum were contacted by mail.[1] The Deans were asked to forward a questionnaire to the administrator in their college who was most knowledgeable about vacancies and search procedures for general curriculum professors. Of the ninety-five institutions contacted, seventy-one or seventy-five percent returned completed questionnaires. In all cases the instruments were completed by a department chairperson, an assistant dean or the dean.

The responses from these seventy-one colleges and universities were analyzed first by total responses and then by the sub-categories of size, setting, type, and area of the United States. The size classification included two small (5,000-9,999 student enrollment), thirty medium (10,000-19,999 student enrollment) and thirty-nine large (20,000-plus student enrollment) institutions. The setting categories included thirty-eight institutions located in urban communities and thirty-three in non-urban communities. The type of institution was used to classify fifty-six public and fifteen private colleges and universities. The geographic location categories included eleven institutions in the Northeast, thirteen in the Southeast, twenty-seven in the North Central, seven in the South Central, four in the Northwest, and nine in the Southwest sections of the United States.

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[1] NCATE 23rd Annual List 76-77. (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education: Washington, D.C.) 1976 pp. 10-39.

FINDINGS CONCERNING JOB VACANCIES

Anticipated Vacancies Over the Next Three-Year Period

Of the seventy-one institutions responding, twenty indicated they would have general curriculum vacancies as the result of retirements at the end of 1977-78, thirteen reported they would have such openings at the end of 1978-79, and sixteen identified positions available at the end of 1979-80. Most of these institutions reported they would have only one vacancy to fill in a given year.

A total of eighty openings were identified for this three-year period; twenty-nine will be available at the end of 1977-78, twenty-two at the end of 1978-79, and twenty-nine at the end of 1979-80. Nearly two-thirds of all vacancies were reported by universities enrolling 20,000 or more students. The large majority of these positions will be available in urban communities. About four out of five curriculum openings will be in public institutions.

The largest number of these general curriculum jobs was reported by institutions in the Southeast with over one-fourth of all the vacancies occurring in that area (twenty-two positions). Two other areas of the country will each have about one-fifth of the positions; the Northwest (sixteen positions) and North Central (fifteen positions). The colleges and universities that reported the fewest openings between Spring 1978 and Fall 1981 were located in the Northeastern (five positions) and South Central (nine positions) United States.

It also appears that these general curriculum positions will be filled. Fourteen of the institutions which will have vacancies at the end of 1977-78 indicated they will fill those openings: only two believed their general curriculum position(s) would be lost. No institution reporting positions at the close of 1978-79 and 1979-80 was certain they would not employ someone

for their vacancies in general curriculum, although less than half were certain about filling those positions.

In addition to vacancies that are anticipated due to retirements, the responding seventy-one institutions indicated that they would add thirty-three new positions between Spring 1978 and Fall 1981. These new positions were reported in about equal numbers by medium and large and by urban and non-urban institutions. Thirty of the thirty-three positions, however, were found in public colleges and universities. Again, the largest number of these vacancies was found in Southeastern United States.

Anticipated Rank and Salary of Vacancies

As one might expect in a time of tight money, most general curriculum positions available over the next three years will be at the rank of assistant professor. About seven out of every ten positions will be filled at this rank, two in ten at the rank of associate professor, and one in ten at the rank of full professor. This was generally true for both public and private and urban and non-urban institutions. While larger universities reported this same pattern, medium size institutions reported a higher proportion of openings at the associate professor rank.

With the exception of institutions in the Southeast and North Central United States, the proportion of openings at each rank was about the same for all respondents. Universities and colleges in the North Central area reported that all but one vacancy would be filled by assistant professors. Southeastern institutions, on the other hand, indicated that half of their job openings would be at the rank of associate or full professor. In fact, only one full professor vacancy was reported outside the Southeastern United States.

The typical starting salary for an assistant professorship on a nine-month contract ranged between $10,000 and $19,999. Approximately half of the

institutions responding indicated beginning salaries between $10,000 and $14,999 and the other half between $15,000 and $19,999. Institutions with enrollment of over 20,000 (large), in urban settings, and classified as public tended to have the higher starting salaries for assistant professors.

The most common beginning salary for positions to be filled by associate professors ranged between $15,000 and $19,999 for nine months. This salary range was typical regardless of the size, setting, or type of institution. It should be noted that about one in five universities and colleges did report a starting salary in the $20,000-24,999 range for associate professors.

As expected, the highest starting salaries were reported for full professors. The modal salary reported for these positions was between $20,000 and $24,999. This salary range was typical for institutions in all size, setting, and type categories. One-fourth of the institutions indicated beginning salary of over $25,000 for full professors.

Particularly noteworthy is the data which show that the highest starting salaries for positions at all ranks were reported by colleges and universities in the Northeast. Thus, the institutions with the smallest number of openings over the next few years will be those with the largest beginning salaries.

Positions Added and Lost Over the Past Three Years

It was anticipated that with the current conditions in higher education there had been an overall decrease in the number of general curriculum positions in colleges and universities during the previous three years. This survey, however, showed just the opposite. Between 1974-75 and 1976-77 a net increase of thirteen general curriculum positions was reported by the seventy-one responding institutions. In 1974-75 sixteen new curriculum positions were added and eight were lost; in 1975-76 eighteen positions were added and seven were lost; and in 1976-77 nine positions were added and fifteen were lost. During this period, the greatest gains were in large, urban, and public institutions. The

greatest losses were recorded by large, public but non-urban universities and colleges.

The geographic area which had the greatest number of institutions adding general curriculum positions between 1974-75 and 1976-77 were in the North Central and Southeastern United States. The area which lost the largest number of positions during these years was also the North Central United States.

FINDINGS CONCERNING SEARCH PROCEDURES

The search process used by universities and colleges to fill general curriculum positions was also examined in this study. In assessing the nature of this process, only those items of general value to persons concerned with employment of a general curriculum professor were considered. The specific aspects of the search process examined were the membership of the search committee, the means used to announce vacancies, the materials required with a formal job application, the methods used to screen applications, the factors emphasized when reviewing candidates, and the length of the search.

Membership of Search Committee

The nature of the search committee membership is of particular importance to those applying for general curriculum vacancies. Just who are the people that will review the candidates' credentials? According to the institutions responding, most of the committees include one or more general curriculum faculty (93%), other staff members from the home department of the curriculum faculty (80%), the department chairperson (65%), and faculty from other departments in the College of Education (56%). A few search committees include a dean (25%), educational practitioners (12%), and students (12%). The committee membership was very much the same for institutions of various sizes, in different settings, of different types and in all areas of the United States.

Announcement of Vacancies

The medium used by the largest proportion of institutions to announce general curriculum openings was the Chronicle of Higher Education (92%). Other means that were reported frequently included notices to Deans of Colleges of Education (77%), to professors of curriculum (62%) and to Departments of Curriculum and Instruction (59%). One substantial difference was identified when the data were analyzed by size, setting, and type of institutions. Many more larger institutions announced their vacancies through notices to chairpersons of Departments of Curriculum and Instruction (90%).

Materials Required with Job Applications

The materials required most often by institutions when making application for general positions included a curriculum vitae (96%), placement credentials (92%), references to be contacted by the search committee (83%), and a transcript (63%). These were typical requirements regardless of size, setting, type or location of institution. While about half of the colleges and universities in all institutional sub-categories required samples of the applicants' research and publications, a much larger proportion of private institutions (72%) require access to such materials for review.

Screening Methods

After the application deadline for a curriculum vacancy is past, three-fourths of the institutions reported that their search committees used four basic methods of screening candidates. First, they checked the applicants' qualification to see which ones met pre-determined criteria (85%). Following the initial screening of the materials submitted by the candidate, the committee checked with previous employers and associates to verify information and to seek additional data (77%). This is then followed by preliminary interviews

with the candidates by phone or at conferences (76%). Next, several candidates were asked to campus for interviews and the final candidate(s) was/were selected after all interviews were completed (73%). The most common next step reported was for the committee to nominate two or more candidates to the chairperson or dean who made the final selection (52%). Again, this pattern was generally true regardless of size, setting, type, or location of the college or university.

Factors Considered Important When Reviewing Applicants

The importance given to various areas of curriculum study, experiences, and other factors when reviewing applications for general curriculum positions at the rank of assistant professor was also examined. The ratings for all respondents showed that curriculum design was considered the most important area of curriculum study, followed by the study of curriculum theory, curriculum evaluation and general K-12 curriculum. These areas of study were all reported as the top four most important with little variation in ranking when institution responses were analyzed by size, setting, type, and area of the country.

Other experiences and characteristics of the candidate which were viewed as important when considering applicants for an assistant professorship included, in rank order, the candidates' (1) prospects for research and publication, (2) teaching experiences in public or private schools, (3) prospects for providing service, (4) previous experience as a curriculum practitioner, (5) previous publication record, and, (6) a generalist rather than a specialist orientation. Those characteristics and factors which were rated as least important were (1) having a Ph.D. rather than an Ed.D., (2) willingness to accept a non-tenured position, (3) sex of the candidate, (4) ethnic background, and (5) experience teaching at the undergraduate level. These most and least important characteristics and experiences were noted across all sub-categories of institutions. Urban

and private universities and colleges, however, did place more importance on where the candidates had earned their degrees.

Additional requirements were reported when positions were to be filled at the rank of associate or full professor. For those positions, the candidate was expected to have an established research and publication record, to be able to attract graduate students, to "have a reputation" as a curriculum generalist. Generally, the differences between the factors stressed for assistant professors and those emphasized for vacancies at higher ranks were more in degree than kind.

Time of the Search

Two items related to time in the search procedure were examined. One was the total length of the search from start to employment. The other concerned the length of time a candidate usually had to wait before receiving a rejection notice. Nearly three-fourths of all responding institutions indicated that they completed a search for a general curriculum vacancy within six months. This was true regardless of institution size, setting, or type. Slightly more than three in five institutions send rejection notifications to candidates by the thirteenth week of the search. Generally non-urban and private colleges and universities took longer to send out rejections. All institutions, however, did send letters notifying applicants when they had been turned down.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Assuming that there will be no substantial changes in the conditions which affect staffing in Colleges of Education during 1977-78 through 1979-80, these findings provide some useful information to educators interested in employment of general curriculum professors. However, should there be a significant increase or decrease in the financial support or student enrollment for the Colleges of Education that have doctoral programs in general curriculum, the job market may change drastically from that described here. At least

that was the opinion of the seventy-one administrators who provided data for this study.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this national survey, the following conclusions seem justified:

* Over the next three years, there will be between eighty and one hundred thirteen curriculum vacancies in colleges and universities granting doctorates in curriculum.

* The greatest number of job openings between now and the Fall of 1981 will be in large, public institutions in urban communities.

* Most curriculum positions open during the three years will be filled at the rank of assistant professor. There will be limited opportunity for assistant professors now employed in curriculum positions to move up in rank through a change in job.

* The best job opportunities for general curriculum in terms of number of positions and opportunity for advancement to associate or full professor will be, as they have been since 1974-75, in the Southeastern United States.

* Since 1974-75 the number of general curriculum positions in colleges and universities offering the doctorate in curriculum have remained unchanged or increased slightly. The projections for vacancies during the next three years suggest it is unlikely that there will be a reduction and there may, in fact, be an increase in general curriculum positions in institutions of higher education similar to those participating in this study.

* The nature of search committees and the procedures used to announce, screen and employ a candidate for a general curriculum position are very similar for all institutions with doctoral programs in curriculum.

* The factors considered most important when reviewing a candidate for a general curriculum position at the rank of assistant professor include the study of curriculum design, theory and evaluation; experiences as a teacher and curriculum practitioner; and potential for research, publishing, and service.

Implications

These findings and conclusions indicate that there will continue to be a limited number of general curriculum positions in colleges and universities with doctoral programs in curriculum. They also imply some guidelines for those seeking employment as curriculum specialist in higher education. For

example, when preparing the candiate's vitae and placement credentials, consideration should be given to the audience (the typical membership of screening committees) and to highlighting those areas of study, experiences, and other factors which are emphasized most in the initial screening. The candidate should have access to the Chronicle of Higher Education, given that almost all general curriculum positions are advertised in that publication.

It is also fairly clear, from the screening procedures used by most committees, that applicants for general curriculum positions should expect that the people they use as references will be contacted after the candidate's papers make it through the initial screening. This means that the selection of personal references is very important. References might be selected because they can verify the applicant's competence in the areas of study, experiences, etc., reported as important when reviewing people for curriculum vacancies.

Assuming the applicant is still among the candidates being considered, he/she can usually expect a preliminary interview after the references are checked. If an applicant does not receive a rejection notice within thirteen weeks, there is a good chance he or she is still in the running.

Parts of this study may also have implications for those currently in their graduate programs and aspiring to a college or university-level position in curriculum. Of course, these data are descriptive, but they do suggest that certain areas of study and experiences may be helpful in obtaining college employment in general curriculum. It might, therefore, be helpful to include these areas of study and experience in the doctoral program. For example, an internship with curriculum practitioners might be part of a program if the person did not have this kind of experience in his/her background prior to

entering the program. Or, the graduate student might be encouraged to do research and publish while pursuing the doctorate. Both of these experiences were rated as important in selecting new assistant professors.

Since this was a descriptive study, it is impossible to predict whether attending to the areas of study and experiences emphasized in the review of candidates will, in fact, result in obtaining a college position. Further studies are needed to determine those factors which, in fact, do influence employment as a curriculum professor. This study is a beginning in an area where most facts are the results of intuition with little or no data to support them.

Appendix A

States in Each Geographic Region

Northeast	Connecticut	New Hampshire
	Delaware	New Jersey
	District of Columbia	New York
	Maine	Pennsylvania
	Maryland	Rhode Island
	Massachusetts	Vermont
Southeast	Alabama	North Carolina
	Florida	South Carolina
	Georgia	Tennessee
	Kentucky	Virginia
	Mississippi	West Virginia
North Central	Illinois	Missouri
	Indiana	Nebraska
	Iowa	North Dakota
	Kansas	Ohio
	Michigan	South Dakota
	Minnesota	Wisconsin
South Central	Arkansas	Oklahoma
	Louisiana	Texas
Northwest	Idaho	Washington
	Montana	Wyoming
	Oregon	
Southwest	Arizona	Nevada
	California	New Mexico
	Colorado	Utah

Appendix B

Sample of Colleges and Universities by Geographic Region

Northeast

Burton Blatt
Dean, School of Education
Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13210

William H. Clark
Assoc. Dean, College of Education
The University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627

Dean
Department of Education
Springfield College
Springfield, MASS 01109

Robert A. Dentler
Dean, School of Education
Boston University
Boston, MASS 02215

Dean Mario Fantini
School of Education
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MASS 01002

Daniel E. Griffiths
Dean, School of Education
New York University
New York, NY 10003

Henry J. Hermanowicz
Dean, College of Education
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

James Kelly Jr.
Dean, School of Education
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Dean Jonathon Messerli
School of Education
Fordham Univ., Lincoln Ctr.
New York, NY 10023

Gilbert D. Moore
Dean, School of Education
State Univ. of N.Y.-Albany
Albany, NY 12222

H. Gerthon Morton
College of Education
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Harold J. Noah
Dean of Academic Affairs
Teachers Col., Columbia Univ.
New York, NY 10027

Walter T. Petty, Dean
Faculty Edu. Studies
State Univ. of N.Y.-Buffalo
Buffalo, NY 14214

Lester E. Przewlocki
Dean, School of Education
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MASS 02167

Milton Schwebel, Dean
Graduate School of Edu.
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Jay D. Scribner
Dean, College of Education
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Mark R. Shibles
Dean, School of Education
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06268

Paul Ylvisaker
Dean of the Grad. School
Hardvard University
Cambridge, MASS 02138

Perry A. Zirkel
Dean, School of Education
Le High University
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Southeast

Jerry J. Bellon, Head
Dept. of Curr. & Inst.
University of Tenn.-Knoxville
Knoxville, TN 37916

Jack E. Blackburn
Dean, School of Education
Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36830

Richard N. Brandt
Dean, School of Education
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA 24061

George W. Denemark
Dean, College of Education
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506

John Dunworth, President
George Peabody College
for Teachers
Nashville, TN 37203

Anne Flowers
Department of Education
Duke University
Dunham, NC 27706

James L. Grant
Dean, College of Education
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Roy M. Hall
Dean, School of Education
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

Merrill M. Hawkins
Dean, Col. of Education
Mississippi State Univ.
State College, MISS 39762

Karl T. Hereford,
Dean of Education
Va. Poly. Inst. & St. Univ.
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Lou Kleinman
Dean, School of Education
University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL 33124

Leon M. Lessinger
Dean, College of Education
Univ. of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

William G. Monahan, Dean
College of Human Res. & Edu.
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

S.A. Moorhead
Dean, School of Education
University of Mississippi
University, MISS 38677

Paul G. Orr
Dean, College of Education
University of Alabama
University, AL 35486

David H. Reilly
Dean, School of Education
University of N.C.-Greensboro
Greensboro, NC 27412

Robert L. Saunders
Dean, College of Education
Memphis State University
Memphis, TN 38152

William C. Self
School of Education
University N.C.-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Bert L. Sharp
Dean, College of Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

J.A. Williams
Dean, College of Education
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

North Central

Robert J. Alfonso
Dean, College of Education
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Barry Anderson
Acting Dir. of Grad. Inst.
Washington University
St. Louis, MO 63130

Dean J. Myron Atkin
College of Education
University of IL.
Urbana, IL 61801

H. Kenneth Barker
Dean, College of Edu.
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325

B.J. Chandler
Dean, School of Edu.
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60201

Elmer J. Clark
Dean, College of Edu.
S. IL. Univ. at Carbondale
Carbondale, IL 62901

Wilbur J. Cohen
Dean, School of Edu.
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Frederick R. Cyphert
Dean, College of Edu.
Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

George E. Dickson
Dean, College of Edu.
The Univ. of Toledo
Toledo, OH 43606

J. Joseph Doerr
Dean, School of Edu.
Univ. of Miss.-Kansas City
Kansas City, MO 64110

Robert L. Egbert
Dean, Teachers College
Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68508

David Elsass
Dean, College of Edu.
Bowling Green State Univ.
Bowling Green, OH 43403

Hendrick D. Gideonse
Dean, College of Education
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH 45221

Keith Goldhammer
Dean, College of Edu.
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

Samuel Goldman
Dean, College of Edu.
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

Richard P. Gousha
Dean, School of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47401

James Heald
Dean, College of Edu.
Northern Illinois Univ.
DeKalb, IL 60115

Howard K. Jones
Dean, College of Edu.
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52240

Robert B. Kane
Director, Teacher Edu.
Purdue University
W. Lafayette, IN 47907

James V. Mitchell
Dean, Teacher's College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Thomas E. Moriarty
Dean, School of Edu.
University of S. Dakota
Vermillion, SD 57069

John R. Palmer
Dean, School of Education
Univ. of Wis.-Madison
Madison, WI 53706

Gene L. Piche, Asst. Dean,
College of Education
University of Minn.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

John Sandberg
Dean, College of Edu.
Western Michigan Univ.
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Dale P. Scannell
Dean, School of Education
The Univ. of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045

Alfred Schwartz
Dean, College of Education
Drake University
Des Moines, IA 50311

Edward Simpkins
Dean, College of Edu.
Wayne St. University
Detroit, MI 48202

North Central (Cont.)

Jordon B. Utsey
Dean, College of Education
Kansas St. University
Manhattan, KS 66506

John M. Wazniak
Dean, School of Edu.
Loyola Univ. of Chicago
Chicago, IL 60611

Bob G. Woods
Dean, Coll. of Edu.
Univ. of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, MO 65201

South Central

Robert H. Anderson
Dean, College of Edu.
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX 79409

John E. Douthitt
College of Education
N. Texas State Univ.
Denton, TX 76203

Robert B. Howsam
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Houston
Houston, TX 77004

Frank W.R. Hubert
Dean, College of Edu.
Texas A & M University
College Station, TX 77843

Lorrin Kennamer
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Texas-Austin
Austin, TX 78712

Donald W. Robinson
Dean, College of Edu.
Oklahoma St. Univ.
Stillwater, OK 74074

Peter A. Soderbergh, Dean
Louisiana St. Univ. & Agri. & Mech. College
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Fred Vescolani
Dean, College of Edu.
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AK 72701

Richard Wisniewski
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73069

Northwest

George Brain
Dean, College of Edu.
Washington St. Univ.
Pullman, WA 99163

Robert D. Gilberts
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

Frederic T. Giles
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

David C. Smith
Dean, School of Edu.
University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59801

Laurence A. Walker
Dean, College of Edu.
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY 82071

Southwest

Curtis N. Van Alfen
Dean, College of Edu.
Brigham Young Univ.
Provo, UT 84601

Oral L. Ballam
Dean, College of Edu.
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84321

Dean Merle Borrowman
School of Education
Univ. of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

Bruce W. Broderuis
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of N. Colorado
Greeley, CO 80639

David W. Darling
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Robert L. Erdman, Dean
Grad. School of Edu.
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Ralph A. Forsythe
Director, School of Edu.
Univ. of Denver
Denver, CO 80210

William H. Johnson, Dean
College of Prof. Studies
Colorado St. University
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Stephen J. Knezevich
Dean of Education
Univ. of Southern Calif.
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Karl Openshaw
Dean, School of Edu.
Univ. of Colorado
Boulder, CO 80309

F. Robert Paulsen
Dean, College of Edu.
Univ. of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721

Delbert D. Weber
Dean, College of Edu.
Arizona St. Univ.
Tempe, AZ 85281

TABLE 16: Mean Importance Given Areas of Doctoral Study, Experience, and Other Characteristics When Reviewing Candidates for General Curriculum Positions at the Rank of Assistant Professor by Size, Setting and Type of Institution*

Area of Consideration	All			Setting				Type			
				Urban		Non Urban		Public		Private	
	Rank	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Curriculum K-12	4	2.17	1.24	2.06	1.29	2.30	1.20	2.04	1.21	2.80	1.32
Elementary Curriculum (K-6)	7	2.91	1.16	3.07	1.22	2.69	1.12	2.76	1.06	3.67	1.50
Secondary Curriculum (7-12)	6	2.87	1.16	3.04	1.16	2.65	1.16	2.72	1.07	3.75	1.39
Curriculum Theory	2	1.95	1.08	2.00	1.19	1.85	.95	2.00	1.06	1.75	1.22
Curriculum Design	1	1.76	1.07	1.74	1.16	1.73	.96	1.76	1.04	1.82	1.25
Curriculum Evaluation	3	2.06	1.13	2.18	1.14	1.85	1.12	2.10	1.11	2.00	1.27
Curriculum Inquiry	5	2.50	1.19	2.53	1.22	2.42	1.21	2.40	1.11	3.11	1.54
Previous experience as a curriculum practitioner	4	2.09	1.06	2.21	1.12	1.97	1.03	2.07	1.02	2.30	1.34
Previous experience as a professor	10	3.02	1.12	3.06	1.22	2.97	1.05	2.98	1.01	3.30	1.64
Teaching experience at the graduate level	9	2.92	1.16	2.94	1.30	2.93	1.03	2.94	1.12	2.73	1.42
Teaching experience at the undergraduate level	12	3.12	1.15	3.18	1.22	3.07	1.00	3.06	1.10	3.36	1.43
Teaching experience in the public or private schools	2	1.89	.91	1.88	1.05	1.93	.75	1.89	.89	2.00	1.05
Ability to supervise graduate assistants	8	2.89	1.23	3.06	1.37	2.69	1.04	2.91	1.15	2.82	1.66
Generalist-Orientation	6	2.50	1.13	2.61	1.17	2.41	1.12	2.32	1.03	3.30	1.25
Specialist-Orientation	11	3.11	1.06	3.12	1.02	3.10	1.16	3.07	1.01	3.40	1.35
A Ph.D. rather than an Ed.D.	16	4.33	1.15	4.20	1.28	4.43	1.01	4.25	1.21	4.64	.81
Institution granting the candidate's degree	7	2.69	1.12	2.46	1.04	2.90	1.19	2.82	1.12	2.09	.94
Ethnic background	13	3.30	1.35	3.21	1.36	3.39	1.34	3.21	1.32	3.60	1.50
Sex	14	3.52	1.36	3.41	1.33	3.64	1.39	3.42	1.35	3.82	1.40
Prospects for providing service	3	1.91	.97	2.03	1.00	1.77	.97	1.91	.91	2.00	1.33
Prospects for research and publishing	1	1.81	.99	1.86	1.08	1.70	.89	1.85	1.04	1.62	.76
Previous publication record	5	2.33	1.09	2.26	1.07	2.34	1.05	2.37	1.10	2.09	1.04
Willing to accept non-tenure track position	15	3.82	1.41	3.75	1.52	3.81	1.30	3.63	1.44	4.80	.63

*Ratings on each of these factors ranged from 1 (high emphasis) to 5 (low emphasis) given during screening of candidates.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF TABLES

For copies contact:
Dr. Fred H. Wood
150 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802

1. Number and Percentage of Institutions of Higher Education Indicating Vacancies in General Curriculum at the End of 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80, and Commitment to Filling Those Positions.

2. Distribution of Vacancies in General Curriculum at the End of 1977-78, 1978-79 and 1979-80 by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

3. Distribution of General Curriculum Vacancies at the End of 1977-78, 1978-79, and 1979-80 by Geographic Area of the United States.

4. Number of General Curriculum Positions That Will be Added for 1978-79, 1979-80, and 1980-81 by Size, Setting, and Type.

5. Number of General Curriculum Positions That Will be Added for 1978-79, 1979-80, and 1980-81 by Area of the United States.

6. Rank at Which General Curriculum Vacancies Will be Filled by Size, Setting, and Kind of Institution.

7. Rank at Which General Curriculum Vacancies Will be Filled by Areas of the United States.

8. Typical Salary a Candidate Can Anticipate for Nine-Month Contract by Rank and Size, Location and Kind of Institution.

9. Typical Salary a Candidate Can Anticipate for Nine-Month Contract by Rank and Area of the United States.

10. Number and Percent of Institutions That Added and Lost General Curriculum Positions Between Fall 1974 and Spring 1977 by Size, Settings, and Type.

11. Number and Percent of Institutions That Added and Lost General Curriculum Positions Between Fall 1974 and Spring 1977 by Area of the United States.

12. Composition of Search Committees Reviewing Candidates for General Curriculum Positions by Size, Setting and Type of Institution.

13. Media Used to Advertise General Curriculum Vacancies by Size, Setting, and Type of Institutions.

14. Materials Required by Institutions When Submitting Applications for General Curriculum Vacancies by Size, Setting and Type of Institutions.

15. Methods Typically Employed by Institutions Screening Applicants for General Curriculum Positions by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

16. Mean Importance Given Areas of Doctoral Study, Experience, and Other Characteristics When Reviewing Candidates for General Curriculum Positions at the Rank of Assistant Professor by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

17. Number of Applicants for Vacant Positions in General Curriculum by Size, Setting, and Type.

18. Length of Search for General Curriculum Positions from start to Employment by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

19. Number of Weeks Between Application and Notification of Rejection by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

16. Mean Importance Given Areas of Doctoral Study, Experience, and Other Characteristics When Reviewing Candidates for General Curriculum Positions at the Rank of Assistant Professor by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

17. Number of Applicants for Vacant Positions in General Curriculum by Size, Setting, and Type.

18. Length of Search for General Curriculum Positions from start to Employment by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.

19. Number of Weeks Between Application and Notification of Rejection by Size, Setting, and Type of Institution.